

KAZAN

JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—Kazan, the wild sled dog, one-quarter wolf and three-quarters "husky," distrustful of all men because of their brutal treatment of him, learns to love his master's wife when she is kind to him in new and strange surroundings.

CHAPTER II—He shows snarling enmity to McCready, who is to accompany Thorpe and his wife to the Red River camp.

CHAPTER III—Kazan knows that McCready is a murderer. McCready stealthily carcases Isabel's hair and Kazan attacks him. Thorpe whips Kazan. McCready tries to murder Thorpe and attacks Isabel. Kazan kills him and then, fearing the club in punishment, runs away into the forest.

CHAPTER IV—Torn between love of his mistress, the fear of his master's club and the desire of the wolf nature in him, he at length sends forth the wolf cry.

CHAPTER V—Kazan runs with the wolves, fights their leader, becomes master of the pack, and mates with Gray Wolf.

CHAPTER VI—Kazan and the pack attack Pierre Radisson, his daughter Joan and her baby, but in the battle Kazan turns dog again and helps drive off the wolves.

When it was over, Kazan and Gray Wolf were alone out on the plain. The pack had slunk away into the night, and the same moon and stars that had



Fought Like Ten Demons Now.

given to Kazan the first knowledge of his birthright told him now that no longer would those wild brothers of the plains respond to his call when he howled into the sky.

He was hurt. And Gray Wolf was hurt, but not so badly as Kazan. He was torn and bleeding. One of his legs was terribly bitten. After a time he saw a fire in the edge of the forest. The old call was strong upon him. He wanted to crawl in to it, and feel the girl's hand on his head, as he had felt that other hand in the world beyond the ridge. He would have gone—and would have urged Gray Wolf to go with him—but the man was there. He whined, and Gray Wolf thrust her warm muzzle against his neck. Something told them both that they were outcasts, that the plains, and the moon, and the stars were against them now, and they slunk into the shelter and the gloom of the forest.

Kazan could not go far. He could still smell the camp when he lay down. Gray Wolf snuggled close to him. Gently she soothed with her soft tongue Kazan's bleeding wounds. And Kazan, lifting his head, whined softly to the stars.

CHAPTER VII.

Joan.

On the edge of the cedar and spruce forest old Pierre Radisson built the fire. He was bleeding from a dozen wounds, where the fangs of the wolves had reached to his flesh, and he felt in his breast that old and terrible pain, of which no one knew the meaning but himself. He dragged in log after log, piled them on the fire until the flames leaped up to the crisping needles of the limbs above, and heaped a supply close at hand for use later in the night.

From the sledge Joan watched him, still wild-eyed and fearful, still trembling. She was holding her baby close to her breast. Her long heavy hair smothered her shoulders and arms in a dark lustrous veil that glistened and rippled in the firelight when she moved. Her young face was scarcely a woman's tonight, though she was a mother. She looked like a child.

Old Pierre laughed as he threw down the last armful of fuel, and stood breathing hard.

"It was close, ma chérie," he panted through his white beard. "We were nearer to death out there on the plain than we will ever be again, I hope. But we are comfortable now, and warm. Eh? You are no longer afraid?"

He sat down beside his daughter, and gently pulled back the soft fur that enveloped the bundle she held in her arms. He could see one pink cheek of baby Joan. The eyes of Joan, the mother, were like stars.

"It was the baby who saved us," she whispered. "The dog was being torn

to pieces by the wolves, and a wolf leaping upon you, when one of them sprang to the sledge. At first I thought it was one of the dogs. But it was a wolf. He tore once at us, and the bear-skin saved us. He was almost at my throat when baby cried, and then he stood there, his red eyes a foot from us, and I could have sworn that he was a dog. In an instant he turned, and was fighting the wolves. I saw him leap upon one that was almost at your throat."

"He was a dog," said old Pierre, holding out his hands to the warmth. "They often wander away from the posts, and join the wolves. I have had dogs do that. Ma chérie, a dog is a dog all his life. Kicks, abuse, even the wolves cannot change him—for long. He was one of the pack. He came with them—to kill. But when he found us—"

"He fought for us," breathed the girl. She gave him the bundle, and stood up, straight and tall and slim in the firelight. "He fought for us—and he was terribly hurt," she said. "I saw him drag himself away. Father, if he is out there—dying—"

Pierre Radisson stood up. He coughed in a shuddering way, trying to stifle the sound under his beard. The flock of crimson that came to his lips with the cough Joan did not see. She had seen nothing of it during the six days they had been traveling up from the edge of civilization. Because of that cough, and the strain that came with it, Pierre had made more than ordinary haste.

"I have been thinking of that," he said. "He was badly hurt, and I do not think he went far. Here—take little Joan and sit close to the fire until I come back."

The moon and the stars were brilliant in the sky when he went out in the plain. A short distance from the edge of the timber line he stood for a moment upon the spot where the wolves had overtaken them an hour before. Not one of his four dogs had lived. The snow was red with their blood, and their bodies lay stiff where they had fallen under the pack. Pierre shuddered as he looked at them. If the wolves had not turned their first mad attack upon the dogs, what would have become of himself, Joan and the baby? He turned away, with another of those hollow coughs that brought the blood to his lips.

A few yards to one side he found in the snow the trail of the strange dog that had come with the wolves, and had turned against them in that moment when all seemed lost. It was not a clean running trail. It was more of a furrow in the snow, and Pierre Radisson followed it, expecting to find the dog dead at the end of it.

In the sheltered spot to which he had dragged himself in the edge of the forest Kazan lay for a long time after the fight, alert and watchful. He felt no very great pain. But he had lost the power to stand upon his legs. His flanks seemed paralyzed. Gray Wolf crouched close at his side, sniffing the air. They could smell the camp, and Kazan could detect the two things that were there—man and woman. He knew that the girl was there, where he could see the glow of the firelight through the spruce and the cedars. He wanted to go to her. He wanted to drag himself close in to the fire, and take Gray Wolf with him, and listen to her voice, and feel the touch of her hand. But the man was there, and to him man had always meant the club, the whip, pain, death.

Gray Wolf crouched close to his side, and whined softly as she urged Kazan to flee deeper with her into the forest. At last she understood that he could not move, and she ran nervously out into the plain, and back again, until her footprints were thick in the trail she made. The instincts of matehood were strong in her. It was she who first saw Pierre Radisson coming over their trail, and she ran swiftly back to Kazan and gave the warning.

Then Kazan caught the scent, and he saw the shadowy figure coming through the starlight. He tried to drag himself back, but he could move only by inches. The man came rapidly nearer. Kazan caught the glint of the rifle in his hand. He heard his hollow cough, and the tread of his feet in the snow. Gray Wolf crouched shoulder to shoulder with him, trembling and showing her teeth. When Pierre had approached within fifty feet of them she slunk back into the deeper shadows of the spruce.

Kazan's fangs were bared menacingly when Pierre stopped and looked down at him. With an effort he dragged himself to his feet, but fell back into the snow again. The man leaned his rifle against a sapling and bent over him fearlessly. With a fierce growl Kazan snapped at his extended hands. To his surprise the man did not pick up a stick or a club. He held out his hand again—cautiously—and spoke in a voice new to Kazan. The dog snapped again, and growled.

The man persisted, talking to him all the time, and once his mittened hand touched Kazan's head, and escaped before the jaws could reach it. Again and again the man reached out

his hand, and three times Kazan touched the touch of it, and there was neither threat nor hurt in it. At last Pierre turned away and went back over the trail.

When he was out of sight and hearing, Kazan whined, and the crest along his spine flattened. He looked wistfully toward the glow of the fire. The man had not hurt him, and the three-quarters of him that was dog wanted to follow.

Gray Wolf came back, and stood with stiffly planted forefeet at his side. She had never been this near to man before, except when the pack had overtaken the sledge out on the plain. She could not understand. Every instinct that was in her warned her that he was the most dangerous of all things, more to be feared than the strongest beasts, the storms, the floods, cold and starvation. And yet this man had not harmed her mate. She sniffed at Kazan's back and head, where the mittened hand had touched. Then she trotted back into the darkness again, for beyond the edge of the forest she once more saw moving life.

The man was returning, and with him was the girl. Her voice was soft and sweet, and there was about her the breath and sweetness of woman. The man stood prepared, but not threatening.

"Be careful, Joan," he warned. She dropped on her knees in the snow, just out of reach.

"Come, boy—come!" she said gently. She held out her hand. Kazan's muscles twitched. He moved an inch—two inches toward her. There was the old light in her eyes and face now, the love and gentleness he had known once before, when another woman with shining hair and eyes had come into his life. "Come!" she whispered as she saw him move, and she bent a little, reached a little farther with her hand, and at last touched his head.

Pierre knelt beside her. He was proffering something, and Kazan smelled meat. But it was the girl's hand that made him tremble and shiver, and when she drew back, urging him to follow her, he dragged himself painfully a foot or two through the snow. Not until then did the girl see his mangled leg. In an instant she had forgotten all caution, and was down close at his side.

"He can't walk," she cried, a sudden tremble in her voice. "Look, mon pere! Here is a terrible cut. We must carry him."

"I guessed that much," replied Radisson. "For that reason I brought the blanket. Mon Dieu, listen to that!"

From the darkness of the forest there came a low wailing cry. Kazan lifted his head and a trembling whine answered in his throat. It was Gray Wolf calling to him.

It was a miracle that Pierre Radisson should put the blanket about Kazan, and carry him in to the camp, without scratch or bite. It was this miracle that he achieved, with Joan's arm resting on Kazan's shaggy neck as she held one end of the blanket. They laid him down close to the fire, and after a little it was the man again who brought warm water and washed away the blood from the torn leg, and then put something on it that was soft and warm and soothing, and finally bound a cloth about it.

All this was strange and new to Kazan. Pierre's hand, as well as the girl's, stroked his head. It was the man who brought him a bowl of meat and tallow, and urged him to eat, while Joan sat with her chin in her two hands, looking at the dog, and talking to him. After this, when he was quite comfortable, and no longer afraid, he



"I Guessed That Much."

heard a strange small cry from the furry bundle on the sledge that brought his head up with a jerk.

Joan saw the movement, and heard the low answering whimper in his throat. She turned quickly to the bundle, talking and cooing to it as she took it in her arms, and then she pulled back the bearskin so that Kazan could see. He had never seen a baby before, and Joan held it out before him, so that he could look straight at it and see what a wonderful creature it was. Its little pink face stared steadily at Kazan. Its tiny fists reached out, and it made queer little sounds at him, and then suddenly it kicked and screamed with delight and laughed. At those sounds Kazan's whole body relaxed, and he dragged himself to the girl's feet.

"See, he likes the baby!" she cried. "Mon pere, we must give him a name. What shall it be?"

"Wait till morning for that," replied the father. "It is late, Joan. Go into the tent, and sleep. We have no dogs now, and will have plenty. So we

must start early."

With her hand on the tent-flap, Joan turned.

"He came with the wolves," she said. "Let us call him Wolf." With one arm she was holding the little Joan. The other she stretched out to Kazan. "Wolf! Wolf!" she called softly.

Kazan's eyes were on her. He knew that she was speaking to him, and he drew himself a foot toward her.

"He knows it already!" she cried. "Good night, mon pere."

For a long time after she had gone into the tent, old Pierre Radisson sat on the edge of the sledge, facing the fire, with Kazan at his feet. Suddenly the silence was broken again by Gray Wolf's lonely howl deep in the forest. Kazan lifted his head and whined.

"She's calling for you, boy," said Pierre understandingly.

He coughed, and clutched a hand to his breast, where the pain seemed gnawing him.

"Frost-bitten lung," he said, speaking straight at Kazan. "Got it early in the winter, up at Fond du Lac. Hope we'll get home—in time—with the kids."

In the loneliness and emptiness of the big northern wilderness one falls into the habit of talking to one's self. But Kazan's head was alert, and his eyes watchful, so Pierre spoke to him. "We've got to get them home, and there's only you and me to do it," he said, twisting his beard. Suddenly he clenched his fists.

His hollow racking cough convulsed him again.

"Home!" he panted, clutching his chest. "It's eighty miles straight north—to the Churchill—and I pray to God we'll get there—with the kids—before my lungs give out."

He rose to his feet, and staggered a little as he walked. There was a collar about Kazan's neck, and he chained him to the sledge. After that he dragged three or four small logs upon the fire, and went quietly into the tent where Joan and the baby were already asleep. Several times that night Kazan heard the distant voice of Gray Wolf calling for him, but something told him that he must not answer it now. Toward dawn Gray Wolf came close in to the camp, and for the first time Kazan replied to her.

(To be continued.)

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In the District Court of Cherokee County, State of Kansas.

Sitting at Columbus.

A. H. Rogers and J. W. Grantham

vs.

Daniel M. Funk, Catherine May, D. C. May, James P. Singleton, J. R. Boyd, E. T. Sumwalt, if they be living, and if not, their unknown heirs, executors, administrators, devisees, trustees and assigns; and The Financial Association, a corporation, if it be legally existing, and if not or dissolved, its unknown heirs, executors, administrators, devisees, trustees and assigns, Defendants.

Publication Notice

State of Kansas to the above named defendants, and each of them:

GREETING:

You and each of you, are hereby notified that the plaintiffs, A. H. Rogers and J. W. Grantham, on the 22d day of May, 1917, filed their petition in the above entitled court in said cause, and that you have been sued in said court and must answer said petition, on or before the 6th day of July, 1917, or said petition will be taken as true and judgment rendered against you, the nature of which will be that the court enter judgment quieting plaintiffs' title, in and to following described real estate, to-wit: The East half (E1-2) of Lot One (1), excepting One (1) acre in the South-west Corner thereof, used for school purposes, in Section Twelve (12), Township Thirty-five 35 South, Range Twenty-four (24) East, in Cherokee County, Kansas, and declaring all claims of estate, or interest, in and to said land, of all of you, the said defendants, to be null and void and of no force or effect as against the estate of said plaintiffs, and barring and excluding all of you from any rights, titles, estates or interest therein, and for such other and further relief as to the court may seem equitable and proper and for costs.

Dated this 22nd day of May, 1917.

A. H. ROGERS,

J. W. GRANTHAM,

Plaintiffs.

Seal By Grant Waggoner, Their Attorney.

Attest Fred Simkin, Clerk of the District Court.

By B. H. Hamilton, Deputy.

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